

Classis Iakota
MINUTES
September 17, 2019 at 10:00am
Lakeview Christian Reformed Church
Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota

Art. 3497: Welcome and Worship:

Rev. Adam Eisenga, the Chairperson for the day, invites the delegates and guests to gather in the Lakeview CRC sanctuary. Rev. Mark Langenbach, pastor of the host church, welcomes the delegates and guests. We sing “Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)” (LUYH 693). Rev. Langenbach reads Exodus 3:9-12 and, in light of a recent tragedy at Lakeview CRC, shares reflections on God’s presence through difficult circumstances. He concludes his reflections with prayer and we sing “Here I Am” (LUYH 869).

Art. 3498: Presentation of Credentials and Roll Call:

| <u>Churches</u> | <u>Ministers</u> | <u>Elders</u> | <u>Deacons</u> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Corsica | - | Dan Noteboom Dennis Niewenhuis | - |
| Harrison | Gary Maas | Keith DeWaard | Ryan Erickson* |
| Inwood | Adam Eisenga | Craig Landegent* | Brian Wallenburg* |
| New Holland | John Gorter | Dan Veurink* | Joel Muckey* |
| Platte | Drew Hoekema | Joel Sybesma* | Bob Middendrop* |
| Rapid City – Hope | Paul Birnbaum | Wayne Bordewyk | - |
| Rock Rapids | Cliff Hoekstra | - | - |
| Rock Valley – Calvin | Gideon Wamala | Galen Van Maanen | Kenny Swigart* |
| Rock Valley – First | Matthew Haan | Larry Haak* | Alex Kooima* |
| Rock Valley – Trinity | Henry Lengkeek | Marlowe Van Ginkel | Brian Broek |
| Sioux Center – Amistad Cristiana | Eddy Olguin | Daniel Sanchez | - |
| Sioux Center – Bethel | John Lee | Jeff Van Voorst* | Jason Meyer* |
| Sioux Center – Bridge of Hope | Joel De Boer | - | Tim Foreman* |
| Sioux Center – Covenant | Joel Kok | Barbara Schaap* | Marvin Wielard* |
| Sioux Center – Faith | Bob Pollema | John Olthoff* | BJ (Brian) Ryks* |
| Sioux Center – First (arrived late) | Kurt Monroe* | Ted Hengeveld* | Eric Eekhoff* |
| Sioux Center – Lebanon | Cory Van Sloten | - | - |
| Sioux Falls – Cornerstone Prison** | Doug De Groot | Gordon Dyke | - |
| Sioux Falls – First | Cal Hoogendoorn | Dale Bloem* | Carl Van Stryland |
| Sioux Falls – Shalom | Kyle De Young | Ver Van Beek* | Marilyn Van Zanten* |
| Valentine – Lakeview | Mark Langenbach | Dean Noteboom | Matthew Walkling* |

*Indicates first time delegates who signed the Covenant for Officebearers.

**Indicates the credentials were not available and the delegates were seated by special motion.

Art. 3499: Classis is declared constituted by the Chair with the following councils having previously recorded their protest of the seating of women delegates, seeing this as a violation of the Word of God: New Holland CRC, Platte CRC, Calvin CRC of Rock Valley, First CRC of Rock Valley.

Art. 3500: The Chair welcomes the delegates and visitors. It is noted that Rev. John Gorter is serving as the Vice-Chairperson for this meeting and that Rev. Stanley Groothof is serving as the Stated Clerk, pro tem. The Chair appoints the delegates from the New Holland CRC to serve as the Credentials (Church Order Article 41) Committee (see Art. 3515 below) and he appoints Rev. Drew Hoekema to handle the prayer concerns (see Art. 3516-B below). The Chair also notes the prospective time schedule for the day (10-11:45, lunch, 1-3:15, coffee, 3:30-).

Art. 3501: Classis examines Stanton Visser for the Office of Commissioned Pastor in area prison ministries under the supervision of Trinity CRC of Rock Valley.

- A. Rev. Henry Lengkeek presents the necessary documents, which include: call and acceptance letters; recommendation from the council of Trinity CRC; academic degrees from Dordt College (B.A.), University of South Dakota (M.A.; Ed.D.), and Benedictine Peace Center (Spiritual Direction Ministry Formation Program); and additional paperwork pertaining to his work in area prison ministries.
- B. Dr. Carl Zylstra reports for Rev. Dave Smit and himself as sermon evaluators on a message based on the assigned text of Ephesians 2:1-10 that Mr. Visser delivered at Trinity CRC on August 18, 2019. He notes its strengths and areas for improvement, concluding with the affirmation that the “message and its delivery would clearly be a blessing to those within the specific ministry to which he is being commissioned.” Their full report is on file with the Stated Clerk.
- C. Rev. Joel De Boer offers a prayer and examines Mr. Visser in the following areas:
(a) practical matters regarding Christian testimony and ministry and (b) knowledge of Scripture, Reformed Doctrine, the standards of the church, and of Church Order.
- D. Opportunities are given to the delegates to ask questions.
- E. Classis enters into Executive Session.
- F. Rev. Bob Pollema leads the assembly in a prayer for guidance.
- G. **Motion** to approve the examination of Stanton Visser and that he be approved for the position of Commissioned Pastor in area prison ministries – *Adopted.*
- H. Executive Session ends.
- I. Mr. Visser is informed of the decision of Classis by the Chair. Delegates and friends gather around him and his wife, Sharon, as Rev. Henry Lengkeek offers a prayer.

Art. 3502: After a delicious steak dinner served by Lakeview CRC, the inaugural Heartland-Iakota Safe Church Team Report (Agenda, pp. 12-13) is given by Ms. Tara Boer.

- A. Ms. Boer summarizes the start and role of the Heartland-Iakota Safe Church Team which exists to help churches develop, update, and apply safe church policies, serving as a bridge between denominational resources and churches in our region. At this point, this team is not addressing “environmental” safety (*e.g.*, response to an armed attacker in a church), focusing instead on preventing and responding to abuse of ministry participants. The delegates receive printed resources and ask Ms. Boer several questions.
- B. **Motion** to approve the work of the Safe Church Team – *Adopted.*

Art. 3503: Classis receives for information various reports.

- A. Dr. Wayne Kobes presents a verbal and written report about recent and upcoming happenings at Dordt University.
- B. Rev. Dave Heilman presents a verbal and written report about the ministries happening at Inspiration Hills, noting financial needs and upcoming events.

Art. 3504: The Stated Clerk’s Report (Agenda, pp. 2-3) is presented by Rev. Stanley Groothof.

- A. Received for information following Synod 2019:
 1. A note from CRC Synodical Services calling attention to action taken by Synod 2019 in response to the Classis Iakota overture regarding funding, support, and care for missionaries: “That synod commend Classis Iakota for its sensitivity and concern for our Resonate Global Mission missionaries.”
 2. A note from Dr. Steve Timmermans, Executive Director for the CRCNA: “The appeal of the decision of Classis Iakota to deny Ms. De Wit’s appeal of actions of Bethel CRC was heard by Synod 2019 in executive session. The outcome of Synod’s deliberation

was this: That synod not sustain the personal appeal of Ms. Judy De Wit from a decision of Classis Iakota on March 5, 2019.” (See also Art. 3508-E below.)

- B. **Motion** to grant the requests of Dr. Jason Lief and of Mr. Nathan Nieuwendorp to have their licenses to exhort extended for another two years each. – *Adopted.*
- C. The Church Visitors are made aware of an upcoming cohort learning opportunity.
- D. **Motion** to approve the work of the Stated Clerk – *Adopted.*

Art. 3505: The Classical Interim Committee Report is presented by Rev. Stanley Groothof (Agenda, p. 3).

- A. **Motion** to approve the following functionaries:
 - Rev. Joel Kok: Church Visitor for Group 2
 - Rev. Adam Eisenga: CLMT (clergy member)
 - Mr. Charles Veenstra: Calvin Theological Seminary Board
 - Rev. Bob Pollema: Classical Home Mission Team (second term)
 - Mrs. Jacklyn Nieuwendorp: Classical Home Mission Team (second term) – *Adopted.*
- B. Classis notes the receipt of Rev. Kurt Monroe’s ecclesiastical credentials and welcomes him to Classis Iakota. (See also Art. 3509-B below.)
- C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Interim Committee – *Adopted.*

Art. 3506: Classical Home Missions Committee (CHMC) report is presented by Rev. Drew Hoekema (Agenda, pp 4-5).

- A. Regarding Ministry Shares:
 - 1. **Motion** that any ministries receiving Ministry Share contributions, with the exception of other standing committees, be reported to the Classis Home Missions Committee which will then be responsible for submitting the total recommended support amounts to Classis each fall. – *Adopted.*
 - 2. **Motion** that Classis table deciding the final figures for Ministry Shares until the March 3, 2020, meeting of Classis with the understanding that the current 2019 Ministry Share rates will remain in effect until that time and that the newly adopted 2020 Ministry Share rates will be applied retroactively to January 1, 2020. The Classis also directs the Classical Home Missions Committee to prepare a report for the March 2020 meeting that is clear, understandable, and addresses the concerns raised regarding the reallocation of funds currently assigned to the Siouxland Diaconal Conference. – *Adopted.*
- B. Mr. Tyler Helpers shares with Classis Iakota an update from the Aeropagus Ministry at Iowa State University in which relationships with students and faculty are helping point them to Jesus. Aeropagus is very thankful for Classis’s support. Mr. Helpers asks for prayers for more students to be drawn to this ministry, for the students already involved with this ministry, and for discernment regarding whether to add another person to the staff.
- C. Rev. Fred Wilgenburg thanks Classis for its support of New Roots. His highlights of this ministry include workplace chaplaincies, educational opportunities, and connecting with immigrants in Sioux Falls. Classis hears there are 60+ churches in the Sioux Falls area in which members don’t speak English as a first language and Rev. Wilgenburg has a relationship with many of them. Rev. Wilgenburg reminds Classis that he is willing to preach in Classis Iakota churches and share how God is working through New Roots.
- D. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Home Missions Committee – *Adopted.*

Art. 3507: Classical Ministerial Leadership Team (CMLT) report is given by Rev. Cory Van Sloten (Agenda, p 6).

- A. Rev. Van Sloten notes that the CMLT is currently supporting only one student yet asks for the CMLT to continue receiving ministry shares in the expectation of additional students seeking funding. The CMLT encourages the delegates to seek out students who may be considering (or willing to consider) a career in ministry.

- B. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Ministerial Leadership Team – *Adopted.*

Art. 3508: Church Visitor reports are received.

- A. Classis receives Rev. Gary Maas’s report of his visit to Hope CRC of Rapid City (Agenda, pp. 7-8). They request prayers as they are in a discernment process.
- B. Classis receives Rev. Gary Maas’s report of his visit to Lakeview CRC (Agenda, pp. 8-9).
- C. Classis receives Rev. Bob Pollema’s report on his visit to First CRC of Sioux Falls (Agenda, pp. 9-10). Classis rejoices in how this church is thriving while also being mindful of some challenges that come with thriving that this church is facing.
- D. Rev. Cal Hoogendoorn makes an oral report on the visit he made with Faith CRC of Sioux Center. Classis gives thanks for the great things God is doing there as the leadership faithfully performs their duties as outlined in Church Order Article 42.
- E. Rev. Cal Hoogendoorn notes that he made a follow-up visit with Bethel CRC of Sioux Center after the decision of Synod 2019 pertaining to the appeal (see Art. 3504-A.2 above).
- F. **Motion** to approve the work of the Church Visitors – *Adopted.*

Art. 3509: Church Counselor reports are received.

- A. Rev. John Gorter reports that Corsica CRC is updating their profile and considering a specialized transitional minister.
- B. Classis receives a written report from Rev. Carl Klompjen concerning the arrival and installation of Rev. Kurt Monroe at First CRC of Sioux Center for which they and Classis are grateful. (See also Art. 3505-B above.)
- C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Church Counselors – *Adopted.*

Art. 3510: Siouxland Diaconal Conference (SDC) report is given by Rev. Cliff Hoekstra.

- A. Rev. Hoekstra reviews the recent events leading up to the resolution that “the Siouxland Diaconal Conference cease operation and be dissolved in a timely manner” as summarized in the letters dated July 25, 2019 and August 30, 2019, on file with the Stated Clerk. The SDC board has distributed the remaining funds in the SDC account to Classis Iakota, Classis Heartland, Resonate Global Mission, and World Renew. (See also Art. 3513.A below.) Rev. Hoekstra encourages Classis to find a new way to support our deacons. While it’s appropriate to be sad that this ministry has ended, Classis is grateful for the helpful work of the SDC over the past 34 years.
- B. Rev. Gideon Wamala offers a prayer of gratitude for the work of SDC and of anticipation for upcoming, reimagined missional ministry to take its place.

Art. 3511: Regional Pastor reports are received.

- A. Rev. John Gorter reports on his and Rev. Dave Smit’s work as Regional Pastors connecting with pastors in our Classis. He encourages pastors to reach out to colleagues or a therapist in difficult times. He encourages elders to regularly ask their pastors how they are doing.
- B. **Motion** to approve the work of the Regional Pastors – *Adopted.*

Art. 3512: Minn-I-Kota Youth report is given by Mrs. Lee De Groot (Agenda, pp. 11-12).

- A. Mrs. De Groot, who recently marked her 10th year of working with Minn-I-Kota, highlights how this ministry is supported by 3 classes and impacts youth in 8 states. Mrs. De Groot tells about the junior high retreat at Inspiration Hills with its theme on “Identity” and the impact it had on 131 kids. She teamed up with 22 students from Dordt University to lead this retreat. Classis celebrates with Mrs. De Groot the numeric and spiritual growth among both the retreat attendees and the university students. Mrs. De Groot expresses appreciation for the support and prayers she receives from Classis.
- B. **Motion** to approve the work of Minn-I-Kota Youth – *Adopted.*

Art. 3513: The Classical Treasurer's report is given by Robert Van Ruler.

- A. Mr. Van Ruler provides hardcopies of the Classis financial statement from January 1, 2019, through September 12, 2019, and highlights several points. Mr. Van Ruler informs Classis that SDC requested Classis Iakota to no longer fund this ministry as it has ceased operations and has donated funds back to Classis Iakota. (See also Art. 3510-A above.)
- B. Mr. Van Ruler provides Classis with the CRC Ministry Shares amounts requested for 2020. Classis anticipates receiving instructions in the coming months regarding the reimagined CRC Ministry Shares which will go into effect in 2021. (See also Art. 3515-A below.)
- C. Several points regarding the decision to table deciding Classis Ministry Shares amounts are clarified. (See Art. 3506-A.2 above.)
- D. Mr. Van Ruler provides data of the churches' giving to CRC Ministry Shares in 2018.
- E. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Treasurer – *Adopted.*

Art. 3514: Classis receives for information various reports.

- A. Classis receives for information Calvin Theological Seminary's Communication Points dated August 2019 as emailed to the churches by the Stated Clerk.
- B. Rev. John Lee reports on the Council of Delegates (COD) meeting in May 2019. He notes that the COD will review the appropriateness of the COD commenting immediately prior to Synod 2019 on Classis Iakota's overture to Synod regarding Resonate Global Mission missionary support.
- C. Classis receives for information Rev. Stanley Groothof's Synod 2019 report (Agenda p. 14).
- D. Rev. Joel De Boer reports on Faith Formation Ministries which is currently emphasizing building faith in homes. He provides practical faith building resources for delegates to share with families in their churches.
- E. Classis receives for information Resonate Global Mission's report (Agenda pp. 15-16).
- F. Rev. Cliff Hoekstra presents a report on World Renew, highlighting places it is providing relief and development around the world. Rev. Hoekstra also takes a moment to share with the delegates the impact the testimony of his late son has had on others.

Art. 3515: The Credentials Committee reports that the churches' credentials are in order as per Church Order Article 41. The following items are brought to the attention of Classis:

- A. First CRC of Sioux Center asks what procedure the Classis will follow to gather and prepare feedback to synod regarding the reimagined ministry shares budgeting process. The Credentials Committee notes that the "Synod Decision: Reimaging Ministry Shares" document sent to the churches by the denomination and by our Stated Clerk begins to address this question. When the Classical Interim Committee and the Classis Treasurer receive additional forthcoming instructions, they will prepare a procedure on handling this matter. (See also Art. 3513-B above.)
- B. **Motion:** To correct a procedural oversight two years ago, First CRC of Sioux Center requests Classis Iakota to officially approve and record the retirement of Rev. Dr. Wayne Kobes for reason of age effective August 1, 2017 – *Adopted.*
- C. **Motion:** That Classis gratefully accepts the invitation from First CRC of Sioux Center to host our meeting on March 3, 2020 – *Adopted.*
- D. Material from and discussion of the credentials from Bridge of Hope CRC in Sioux Center:
 - 1. From the council of Bridge of Hope CRC: Classis Iakota is asked to consider holding its spring Classis meeting on a Saturday or a Friday evening/Saturday morning. Two grounds are given: (a) the nature of their (and probably other) council's work schedules and its smaller size often limits the number of delegates who are available to attend on a weekday. Having it on a Saturday or Friday evening/Saturday morning may allow for better participation by elders and deacons from our churches. (b) This would allow

opportunities for time during the Classis meeting to engage in deeper community with each other and cultivate a new richness to the spiritual health and community of our churches beyond “doing business.”

2. Response from the Credentials Committee: Classis can appreciate the challenges that some churches and officebearers face by attending a midweek meeting. But it’s also worth noting reasons to retain our current schedule of meeting on Tuesday: (a) This avoids the extra cost of extra mileage of commuting or of motel stays. (b) This is less stressful for pastors preparing to lead worship on Sunday, especially those coming from a distance. (c) This takes up only one full day of people’s schedules, rather than two days, which affects those who farm and ranch.
3. **Motion:** Recognizing that both schedules have positive points, the Credentials Committee recommends that Classis has a Friday evening/Saturday morning meeting in March 2020 on a one-time trial basis. At the end of that session, the delegates will be given the opportunity to evaluate this schedule. In addition to the grounds given by Bridge of Hope, we believe that holding it on a trial basis would give us a better understanding of the dynamics involved. – *Defeated.*

Art. 3516: Closing matters:

- A. The Chair thanks the host church for their generous hospitality and thanks the delegates for keeping the meeting moving forward well and, more significantly, for doing ministry together.
- B. Rev. Drew Hoekema leads the delegates in a closing prayer. Included in his prayer are items from the minutes above as well as prayers for area farmers who are discouraged with wet fields that were not planted this year and prayers for the family of Loren Bouma of First CRC in Hull who passed away suddenly. Following Rev. Hoekema’s prayer, the delegates sing “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow” (LUYH 965).
- C. Classis adjourns. The next regularly scheduled meeting is on March 3, 2020, to be held at First CRC of Sioux Center.

Rev. Stanley Groothof
Stated Clerk, pro tem